West Bengal: The Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has notified Haldia area of East Medinipur district of West Bengal for the purpose of regulation and control of ground water management and development to check sea water intrusion.

Pondicherry: The Pondicherry Government has constituted the Pondicherry Ground Water Authority to control and regulate ground water development. Extraction of ground water for industrial and irrigation uses from wells within 6 km of the coastline has been banned. Installation of rain water harvesting has been made mandatory for all buildings.

Discussion with Pakistan on Pipeline Project

*35. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he visited Pakistan in the month of May to discuss core issue of import of LNG through $4.16 billion Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project;

(b) if so, what is the outcome of discussions held between two countries;

(c) what other steps were discussed and agreements reached between the two countries;

(d) whether he had also discussions regarding route of pipeline and transit fee with Pakistan; and

(e) if so, whether on this issue also final agreement has been reached?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (e) The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Panchayati Raj visited Pakistan at the invitation of the Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources of Pakistan, between 5-7 June, 2005. The two Ministers reviewed the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline proposal. They agreed that the project, which envisages the supply of gas to

Pakistan and India through a transnational pipeline, would go a long way in meeting the energy security requirements of the two countries and, thus, should be seen as a significant project for the benefit to the people of these countries. The Indian and Pakistani delegations agreed to exchange information in regard to the financial, technical, commercial, legal and related issues to realize a safe and secure world class project. To this end, it was agreed that the momentum pertaining to the project should be accelerated by constituting a Joint Working Group (JWG) at Secretary-level, which will meet regularly and report progress to the Ministers to facilitate definitive decisions by them at the earliest. It was also decided that visits at Ministerial-level would take place to monitor progress. These and other agreements are contained in the Joint Press Statement issued at the end of the visit of Indian Petroleum Minister, a copy of which is placed at Statement-I

[Refer to the Statement-I appended to the answer to S.Q. No. 22 part (a)]

The first meeting of the India-Pakistan JWG was held in New Delhi on 12-13 July 2005. Both sides conveyed their serious commitment to address various issues pertaining to the project and agreed that once basic issues pertaining to the project had been satisfactorily resolved between the three countries concerned, they would enter into a "Framework Agreement". The two sides also agreed on the crucial importance of urgently appointing their respective financial advisory consortia to advise on the project structure and related technical, financial, commercial and legal matters. Details of the project such as capital cost, the route of the pipeline, security issues, transit fees etc., will be examined by the countries concerned on the basis of the advice provided by the technical consultants. A copy of the Joint Press Statement issues at the conclusion of the JWG is placed at Statement-II.

[Refer to the Statement-II appended to the answer to S.Q. No. 22 part (a)]